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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3256
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2167
RUEHTN/AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN 5239
RUEH DU/AMCONSUL DURBAN 9509
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 000152

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DEPT FOR AF/S
HARARE FOR G. WARREN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/22/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [ZI](#) [SF](#)
SUBJECT: MDC FORMATIONS AGREE ON ELECTORAL PACT,
UNIFICATION WITHIN 12 MONTHS

REF: A. HARARE 0016

- [1](#)B. PRETORIA 100
- [1](#)C. HARARE 38
- [1](#)D. PRETORIA 139
- [1](#)E. 05 PRETORIA 1477

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Don Teitelbaum. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) The two formations of the Zimbabwean opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), led by Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara, agreed to form an electoral

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pact during January 19-20 meetings in Johannesburg. IDASA Executive Director Paul Graham and Deputy Ivor Jenkins briefed PolOff on January 22 on the IDASA-funded talks, which were led by Secretaries General Tendai Biti and Welshman Ncube. Each delegation had ten members, and the session was chaired by civil society activist Brian Raftopolous.

[1](#)3. (C) According to Graham and Jenkins, the two sides agreed to support Morgan Tsvangirai as the joint presidential candidate. They will support common candidates for parliamentary seats. The two Secretaries General are "fine tuning the modalities" of the agreement, which will include some difficult political tradeoffs on parliamentary seats. The two MDC formations also agreed to reunify within twelve months. Once the details of the electoral pact are finalized, the MDC will publicly announce the agreement.

[1](#)4. (C) The atmospherics of the meeting were positive and upbeat, said Jenkins, noting that this was the fifth such effort to reunify and/or form a coalition. He was optimistic that this agreement would stick. The two Secretaries General have a positive working relationship, and the reality of the upcoming election (ref A), failed SADC facilitation (refs B & C), and rumored creation of a "third way" political force (refs A & D) have "focused the minds" of the MDC leadership.

[1](#)5. (C) Graham and Jenkins commented on the upcoming Zimbabwean elections, which they understand are likely to take place March 29:

-- The MDC delegations are very unlikely to boycott the elections, despite their threats and the uneven playing field. Most senior MDC leaders believe the party would "fade away" if they did not participate. In addition, MDC MPs want

to retain the salary and perks of a parliamentary seat.

-- For the MDC, the logistical demands of putting forward 210 parliamentary candidates, 90 senate candidates, 5000 local government candidates, and thousands of registered party agents is impossible, given the time remaining.

-- Despite their desire to participate, the MDC leadership told IDASA they believe the election is already rigged (a "fait accompli"). The "real battle for Zimbabwe's democracy will begin the day after the election," Secretary General Biti told Jenkins.

-- Election day is likely to be chaotic, with the newly demarcated constituencies, new polling places, and flawed voting lists. This will create even more opportunity for Mugabe to rig the election.

-- During their recent visit to Zimbabwe, Jenkins and Graham were "deeply discouraged" by civil society, which appeared increasingly disengaged from politics. According to Jenkins and Graham, most civil society groups view the election as largely irrelevant, and relations between civil society and the MDC have never been worse.

-- IDASA is debating internally whether to mobilize a South African civil society observer delegation for the March elections, as they did in 2005 (led by the South African Qelelections, as they did in 2005 (led by the South African Council of Churches and funded by USAID (ref E)). Graham and Jenkins agree that there is no chance of a free and fair election, but are considering whether their on-the-ground voice as "informal observers" from South Africa might help undermine the credibility of ZANU-PF's victory.
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